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C O N F I D E N T I A L MANAMA 000289

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 02/27/2016

TAGS: [PREL](#) [BA](#) [REGION](#)

SUBJECT: BAHRAIN: NO MEETINGS PLANNED WITH HAMAS

REF: STATE 27174

Classified By: DCM Susan L. Ziadeh for reasons 1.4(b) and (d).

[1](#)1. (C) DCM delivered reftel points during a February 22 meeting with MFA Assistant Undersecretary for Coordination and Follow-up Shaikh Abdul Aziz Bin Mubarak Al Khalifa. Shaikh Abdul Aziz said that although he was not aware of any visits to Bahrain by members of Hamas, the U.S. points were not unlike the message the GOB would deliver to a Hamas representative. The evolution of Hamas from the opposition into a governing role required the development of responsible positions and actions.

[1](#)2. (C) Shaikh Abdul Aziz expressed surprise at the strength of the initial U.S. "denouncement" of Hamas, but said that the Secretary's February 21 public comments in Cairo helped to clarify the U.S. position. Cutting off the Palestinians' financial lifeline is not helpful. Hamas should be given an opportunity to prove themselves independent of past activities and without external pressures that may undermine their efforts. He suggested a "behind the scenes" approach worked in consultation with allies to push Hamas forward rather than confrontation.

[1](#)3. (U) Separately, the press reported February 27 that a political societies coordination committee had proposed to the GOB that the societies support and financially assist a Hamas-led government in the face of U.S. and Israeli economic restrictions. The government offered no comment on the proposal.

MONROE